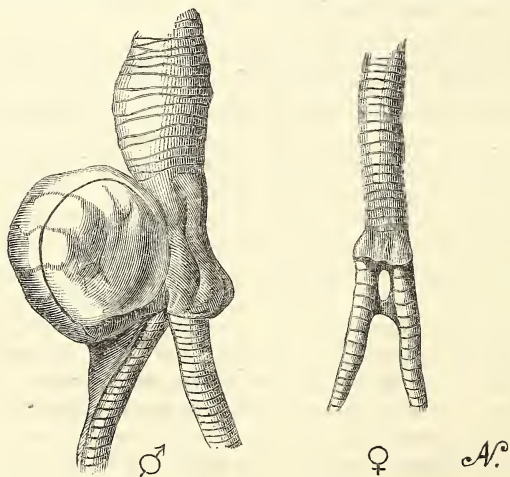


of them clad with quaker-like simplicity in inconspicuous drab, with bills and tarsi often apparently distorted or exaggerated, but wonderfully adapted by their all-wise Creator to supply the means of sustenance in these arid regions. We find here the order *Struthiones*; the genera *Otogyps*, *Crateropus*, *Drymoica*, *Comatibis*, *Corospiza*, *Rhamphocoris*, unknown to Europe; and others, as *Erythrospiza*, *Dromolæa*, *Ammomanes*, *Pterocles*, rarely represented here, but universally distributed there, and under many specific varieties. From the difference of climate and physical geography, this was naturally to be anticipated. It is only mentioned to prove the premises with which we commenced, viz. that, ornithologically, North Africa is a European province, while the Sahara is as decidedly non-European, its affinities being with Nubia and Abyssinia.

XVII.—*Remarks on the Harlequin Duck* (*Histrionicus torquatus*, Bp.). By ALFRED NEWTON, M.A., F.L.S.

THE value of the characters afforded by the trachea in different members of the *Anatidæ* is so well known, that I make no apology for presenting the readers of this Journal with figures of that



organ in a remarkably interesting species, the Harlequin Duck (*Anas histrionica*, L.; *Histrionicus torquatus*, Bp.). Of this

trachea I believe no representation has hitherto been given, though it has been described by Professor MacGillivray, first in the work of Mr. Audubon (Orn. Biogr. v. 617), from which the account is quoted by Mr. Yarrell (Brit. B. iii. 266), and afterwards in the Professor's own book (Hist. Brit. B. v. 170). As this description seems to be quite as detailed and accurate as any I could furnish, and, when taken in connexion with the accompanying engraving, to afford a sufficiently good idea of its form in this species, I need say no more on that head, beyond remarking that, as will be seen from the figure, the bony tympanum of the male is uninterrupted by any of those membranous openings found in all the other Diving Ducks—except the Eiders*—with which I am acquainted, and that in particular it bears no resemblance whatever to the same part in either the Golden-eye (*A. clangula*, L.) or the Long-tailed Duck (*A. glacialis*, L.), the typical representatives of the sections *Clangula* and *Harelda*, in one or the other of which the Harlequin Duck is usually placed by most of those ornithologists who subdivide the great and natural group of Diving Ducks, and near which two species I think all other writers agree in placing it. The specimens of the *trachea* now figured were prepared by me from fine freshly-killed examples of this beautiful species obtained last year by Mr. John Wolley and myself from a merchant at Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, and, excepting one in the Museum at Haslar Hospital, no others, to my knowledge, exist in this country. In these examples, when fresh, the small lobe on each side of the base of the upper mandible, which seems to have escaped the notice of many, if not of most, ornithologists, though it has been duly remarked by some, was very apparent; and I am not aware that this external character exists in any other of the species with which the Harlequin Duck has been usually associated. Indeed, in many dried skins which I have examined, this peculiarity is very easily overlooked, as, unless care be taken to prevent its doing so, it usually shrinks into insignificance as the skin dries, whereas while the bird is fresh it is of a prominent size, although smaller in the female than in the male.

* In the Scoters, it will be recollected, there is nothing that can properly be called a tympanum.

I am inclined to believe that a good deal of misconception exists as to the geographical range of this species, which I think will be found to be much more limited than is usually supposed to be the case. To take two of the latest published authorities on the subject: Dr. Degland states (Orn. Europ. ii. 453) that it “habite les contrées arctiques des deux mondes;” and Mr. Cassin, in Professor Baird’s most valuable work on North American Ornithology, gives as its *habitat* (Pac. R. R. Report, Birds, 799), “Northern sea-coasts of northern hemisphere.” Now, I am pretty sure that in Europe, with the exception of Iceland and Western Asia, it only occurs as an accidental straggler. I believe I am authorized to say that, as far as Mr. Wolley’s experience goes, it is not known as a bird of Lapland, including in the term the north of Norway and Finmark; and I can hardly understand its being, as M. Temminck states (Man. d’Orn. ii. 879), “abondant dans les contrées orientales de l’Europe,” without its occasionally showing itself in the district which has been so assiduously worked by my friend; for I presume there can be no doubt that M. Temminck did not intend to refer to any but the *northern* part of Eastern Europe. In more southern Scandinavia it is certainly rare*, as appears by Prof. Nilsson’s statement (Skandin. Faun. ii. 441). I cannot find that it is known in European Russia, but it seems to occur accidentally on the Caspian and Sea of Aral. It is also said to be met with—like so many other, to us rare, birds—about Lake Baikal; and if the report be true, I think this must be taken, according to our present knowledge, as its normal western limit in Asia; for in the course of Dr. Middendorff’s travels, it appears (Sib. Reise, Zool. Bd. ii. Th. 2. p. 237) to have been found only in the extreme east of Siberia, the localities for it mentioned by him being the S’tanowój Mountains, the southern coast of the Sea of Ochotsk, and the interior of Mandchouria. This enterprising traveller obtained a nestling bird on the 23rd of June at Uds’kój-Os’tróg, of which a characteristic representation is given in his

* The late Mr. Thompson (B. Ireland, iii. 152) mentions, on the authority of Captain May, the occurrence of four adult males in the month of July, on a lake close to the entrance of the Salten Fjord; but as no specimen was obtained, there *might* have been a mistake as to the species.

work (pl. xxii. fig. 3). It probably also occurs in Japan, since, according to Dr. Schlegel (Faun. Jap., Aves, 141), it is "représenté de grandeur naturelle dans plusieurs recueils japonais."

I take this opportunity of remarking, that in two or three asserted instances of the occurrence of *Anas histrionica* in Great Britain, other species seem to have been mistaken for it. In 'The Zoologist' for 1847 (p. 1697) is a note by Dr. Battersby of Torquay, that "a small flock of Harlequin Ducks have frequented our bay, of which I have been fortunate enough to procure two specimens, a male and a female." Now, an example obtained at that time, out of the same flock, was some years since shown me by Mr. Burt, the energetic curator of the Torquay Museum, and there can be no question of its being a young Long-tailed Duck. Again, in 'The Zoologist' for 1852 (p. 3331), my brother reported that a Harlequin Duck had been killed in Banffshire. This he did on the authority of the late Mr. Yarrell, whose letter to Lord March, by whom the bird was shot and kindly given to my brother, after having been submitted to the inspection of that distinguished naturalist, is now before me. In this letter Mr. Yarrell says positively that it "is a young female of the '*Harlequin Duck*' in its first winter plumage;" but the bird is still in our possession, and, I regret to say, is not the rarity I could wish, there being no doubt that it is only a very young example of the Long-tailed Duck. Both this and the Torbay specimens are referred to by Mr. Yarrell in the last edition of his work (B. B. 3rd ed. vol. iii. p. 368). Furthermore, 'The Naturalist' for 1857 (p. 124) contains an extract from 'The Devonport Journal,' which was also quoted in 'The Times' of April 18th, 1857, asserting that a specimen of the Harlequin Duck had been recently killed in Warwickshire; but Mr. H. Buckley, in the same periodical for 1858 (p. 124), states that he made "particular inquiries" respecting this example, and was "informed on undoubted authority that the bird which was mistaken for that rare Duck was, in reality, a female Scaup Duck (*Fuligula marila*).'" In 'The Zoologist' for 1850 (p. 2949) is a detailed account of a pair of Ducks said to be the Harlequin, which built a nest and hatched a brood in a semi-domesticated state at Melbourne in Derbyshire; and this statement has been

copied by Mr. Yarrell in his last edition above mentioned. Now, at the time I first read it, I had a suspicion that there was some mistake here, which further inquiries have much tended to strengthen; but as the author of the paper (Mr. J. J. Briggs) has kindly undertaken to pursue the subject further, I need say no more about it, beyond expressing my full conviction that the birds in question will be found to have been the North-American Wood, Carolina, or Summer Duck (*Aix sponsa*, Boie), which, as is well known, will breed freely in this country, and whose beautifully varied plumage causes it to be often called by dealers by the name rightfully belonging to that species which is the subject of my somewhat lengthy remarks.

XVIII.—*Notes on the Birds of Western Spitzbergen, as observed in 1855.* By EDWARD EVANS and WILSON STURGE.

PARTLY inspired by a love of Natural History, but more by a desire for adventure, we were induced to visit Spitzbergen in the summer of 1855, before a trip to that island was so common as it seems likely now to become; and though we were somewhat disappointed in not finding it so rich in ornithology as we had expected, a short notice of the species we observed there may not be unacceptable to the readers of 'The Ibis,' as we believe that hitherto the only published account of the birds of this, the most northern known land of the Old World, is that contained in the Zoological Appendix to Parry's Fourth Voyage, by James Clarke Ross*.

Our vessel, the 'Anna,' was a fishing-smack of 30 tons register, a fast boat; and had it not been for calms, adverse gales, and fields of ice, we might, with a fair breeze, have easily made the run from Hammerfest (in the north of Norway), our port of departure, in three or four days. But at Bear Island the ice forced us to make a circuit of upwards of sixty miles; thus we were retracing our course almost the only time that we had

* Narrative of an Attempt to reach the North Pole in Boats fitted for the purpose, and attached to His Majesty's Ship 'Hecla,' in the Year 1827, under the Command of Captain William Edward Parry, R.N., F.R.S. London, 1828.